

*Administration of Barack H. Obama, 2010*

**Remarks on the Nomination of James R. Clapper, Jr., To Be Director of National Intelligence**

*June 5, 2010*

*The President.* Good morning, everybody. As President, I have no higher priority than the safety and security of the American people. And in an interconnected world where dangers can emerge suddenly, we have to protect ourselves against the full range of threats, from a terrorist network bent on striking our homeland to nations and violent extremists seeking weapons of mass destruction to transnational threats such as cybercriminals and narcotraffickers.

To keep America safe, my administration is strengthening and integrating every element of our national power: military and economic; diplomacy and development; homeland security, law enforcement, and intelligence. And this final element, timely, accurate intelligence, is uniquely important because it is critical to all the others.

Now, as President, I also depend on the best available intelligence for daily decisions that I make every day. In particular, I depend on the Director of National Intelligence. As DNI, Dennis Blair continued the extraordinary service that defined his entire career. During his tenure, our intelligence community became more integrated and agile, and I will always be grateful to Denny for his sense of purpose and his sense of service.

Today I am proud to announce my choice for the next Director of National Intelligence, James Clapper. With four decades of service to America, Jim is one of our Nation's most experienced and most respected intelligence professionals.

As Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence, he has successfully overseen the military and civilian intelligence personnel and budgets that make up the bulk of our 16-agency intelligence community. He's improved information sharing, increased intelligence support to our troops in Afghanistan and Iraq, upheld civil liberties, and he played a key role in our effort to update and reorient our intelligence community to meet the threats of our time.

As Director of two critical organizations, the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency and the Defense Intelligence Agency, and during a distinguished career in the Air Force, Jim developed an intimate understanding of our human and technical collection programs. He possesses a quality that I value in all my advisers: a willingness to tell leaders what we need to know, even if it's not what we want to hear. And Jim is a forceful champion of his fellow intelligence professionals, never forgetting what it was like to risk his own life during two combat tours during the Vietnam war.

As DNI, Jim will be my principal intelligence adviser and the leader of our intelligence community. Our intelligence community has made great strides since the 9/11 attacks. Guided by good intelligence, we've struck major blows against the leadership of Al Qaida and its terrorist affiliates, and we've disrupted many plots in our country and saved many American lives. But as we saw in the failed attack over Detroit, we need to do even better. We need to constantly evolve and adapt and improve.

That's why I ordered a series of reforms to strengthen intelligence earlier this year, and that's why I'll be looking to Jim to ensure that we have the most capable and efficient intelligence community possible. Intelligence must be collected and analyzed quickly, it must

be shared and integrated effectively, and it must be acted upon decisively. That's what I expect as President, and that's what our national security demands.

In short, our intelligence community needs to work as one, integrated team that produces quality, timely, and accurate intelligence. And let's be honest: This is a tough task. But this will be Jim's core mission. He is eminently qualified, and he has my complete confidence and support.

Jim also understands the importance of working with our partners in Congress—as he has said, not merely to appear when summoned, but to keep Congress informed and to seek Members' advice and consent. Not surprisingly, the Senate has voted to confirm Jim for senior positions on four separate occasions, and each time, it has done so overwhelmingly. Given the importance of this position, the urgent threats to our Nation, and Jim's unique experience, I urge the Senate to do so again and as swiftly as possible.

I've spoken to the appropriate Senate leaders, and I've indicated that I expect this nomination to be completed during this work period. This nomination can't fall victim to the usual Washington politics. And as we go forward, my administration will continue to work with Congress to ensure that Jim and all our intelligence professionals have the authorities, resources, and support that they need to succeed.

Finally, let me say to the men and women across our intelligence community: Most Americans may never see your work, but every American is safer because of your service, and we are profoundly grateful. You have chosen to serve America. Now it's America's duty to back you up so you can fulfill the mission that we ask of you and keep this country safe. That's my promise to you as President of the United States, and that's what Jim Clapper will do as Director of National Intelligence.

So, Jim, to you and your family, who joins us here today, thank you for taking on this critical assignment. And with that, I'd invite Jim to say a few words.

*Director-designate Clapper.* Thank you, sir.

*The President.* Thank you, Jim.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:44 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Director-designate Clapper.

*Categories:* Appointments and Nominations : Intelligence, Office of the Director of National, Director, remarks.

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*Names:* Blair, Dennis C.; Clapper, James R., Jr.

*Subjects:* Afghanistan : U.S. military forces :: Deployment; Arms and munitions : Weapons of mass destruction; Congress : Presidential nominations, confirmation process; Defense and national security : Cyber attacks; Defense and national security : Intelligence; Defense and national security : Potential terrorist attacks, preparedness efforts; Defense, Department of : Defense Intelligence Agency; Defense, Department of : National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency; Drug abuse and trafficking : Foreign narcotics traffickers; Intelligence, Office of the Director of National : Director-designate; Intelligence, Office of the Director of National : Director of National Intelligence; Iraq : U.S. military forces :: Deployment; Terrorism : Al

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